

International Education through Service Learning

Robert G. Bringle, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis,
rbringle@iupui.edu

Service learning: Service learning is a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility.

High Impact Practices (Kuh, Association of American Colleges and Universities): First-year seminars, common intellectual experience, learning communities, writing intensive courses, collaborative learning, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning, internships, capstone courses and projects.

First-Order Hybrid HIPs: Participatory Community Action Research (PCAR) (SL + Research), Civic Internship/Pre-Professional (CIPP) Experiential Education (SL + I/P-PEE); Immersive Service Learning (ISL) (SL + Diversity Learning, including international SL).

International service learning = international education + study abroad + service learning = most powerful pedagogy: Extensive (Broad array of outcomes); Robust (Wide range of conditions and students); Transformational (Deep, long-lasting change); Distinctive (Unique changes).

ISL Definition: *A structured academic experience in another country in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that addresses identified community needs; (b) learn from direct interaction and cross-cultural dialogue with others; and (c) reflect on the experience in such a way as to gain a deeper understanding of global and intercultural issues, a broader appreciation of the host country and the discipline, and an enhanced sense of their own responsibilities as citizens, locally and globally.*

Forms of ISL: (1a) Service and learning (course) abroad; (1b) service abroad, learning via web; (2) domestic SL with local international population(s); (3) mixing international and local students in SL; (4) local SL with international population + short-term service abroad. Other dimensions: short-term vs. long-term; faculty from home institution or a host institution; with or without home stay.

Goals of Study Abroad: Enhance academic learning of various subjects; Develop leadership skills; Advance career paths; Experience personal growth; Improve intercultural skills; Learn a language; Learn about another country, its history, culture, way of life; Cultivate global awareness; Promote international diplomacy and security; Better understand one's own cultural and national background. [Note: Civic learning is not included.]

Study Abroad → SL: Provides cross-cultural experiences not obtainable in home country; Provides opportunity to practice skills and methods in another national setting, with other factors at work than in home country; Provides opportunity to gain international perspective on the topic of the course, or the future profession that the students are pursuing; Broadens the net of service and partnership beyond the home setting; Enables faculty and students to contribute to the solution of problems that affect large numbers of people around the world, provides a channel for students from wealthy, developed nations to contribute to the growth of less developed nations

International → SL: Requires us to self-analyze and identify deeply-held beliefs & values and their potential impact; Requires familiarity with standards and practices of study abroad; Requires us to think about understandings of service and civic practice that differ markedly from

our own; Requires us to think about the global dimensions of service, civic practice, and citizenship.

Second Order Hybrids (w/ SL):

ISL Academic Learning Objectives: Application of discipline/profession to specific problems and cases; Development of a global perspective on the discipline/profession; Reflection on how the discipline/profession is carried out in home country by virtue of contrasting practices between home and host country; Identification of issues for further research and learning; Insight gained from individuals in the community, extending the sources of information and authority beyond the instructor and texts.

ISL Personal Growth Learning Objectives: Development of skills of critical personal reflection and analysis; Enhanced ability to use personal experience for academic learning; Contribution to personal identity formation and self-confidence; Contribution to focusing and defining career goals.

ISL Cross-Cultural Learning Objectives: Enhanced knowledge concerning the economic, political, ecological, health, demographic, and cultural systems of the host country; Appreciation for assets of host country, the integrity of its way of life, and the manner in which it approaches its problems; At least some foreign language acquisition; Reflection upon home country and how others see it; Intensified awareness of relationships between home and host country; Reflection upon issues of power, wealth, ethnicity, and class in both host and home country.

ISL Civic Learning Objectives: Developing aspirations to volunteer and work for the public good; Deeper understanding of the knowledge base necessary for responsible citizenship; Expanding commitment to multiple communities, including those outside home country; Growing sense of the global dimensions of citizenship; Willingness to impart what was learned to others, including other students on campus; Greater awareness of the impact of one's actions on others, including those outside home country; Complex understanding of the formation of values and judgments in a multicultural world; Rethinking concepts of community, service, and civic engagement by virtue of contrast between home and host country.

ISL Preparation: Issues of culture shock and methods of processing the new beliefs and behaviors the students will personally encounter; Guidelines on the basic norms of politeness and social interaction in the host country; Familiarity with the basics of cross-cultural communication, both verbal and non-verbal; At least some rudimentary knowledge of the language of the host country; Strategies for conflict resolution and management Discussion of the value of reciprocity, openness, and learning from others in the globalizing world of the 21st century; Discussion of the historical and present relationship between the U.S. and the host country.

Second-Order Hybrid HIPs (w/ SL): PCAR CIPP; PCAR ISL; CIPP Away.

Third-Order Hybrid HIP: ISL PCAR CIPP

Resources

Bringle, R. G., Hatcher, J. A., & Jones, S. G. (Eds.). (2011). *International service learning: Conceptual frameworks and research*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Green, P. M., & Johnson, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Crossing boundaries: Tension and transformation in international service-learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Lewin, R. (Ed.). (2009). *The handbook of practice and research in study abroad: Higher education and the quest for global citizenship*. Florence, KY: Taylor and Francis Books.